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GOD OR SELF?

A Criticism of the Secularist Theory of Life.

IT has become the commonest of common-places to say that the present age is essentially one of critical enquiry. Traditional beliefs, we are told, are being silently subverted by new agencies. "Science, instead of critically attacking supernatural religion, has surely and irretrievably sapped its foundations. The educated intelligence of to-day is not required to discuss minor points of doctrine and ritual, or the internal discrepancies of revelation, but finds itself confronted with the supreme all-subsuming questions of whether the very essentials of faith can be maintained in presence of the indubitable truths of science, and of the rigorous habit of mind it engenders." In other words, modern criticism has disproved the supernatural, has shown that ancient beliefs can no longer be held, and must eventually disappear before the triumphant march of knowledge. But the scepticism which professes to look upon criticism as its peculiar ally, must, to be logical, go beyond the strict province of criticism. For if there be no supernatural, or to be more accurate, if there be no evidence of the supernatural, if God be not real, but a reflection of man's fears and hopes, a mere play of subjectivity, then the theory of life based upon these must give place to another more consonant with facts. This is the genesis of Secularism. It is admittedly based on the denial of the miraculous. To quote the words of a professed advocate: "Secularism is naturalism in morals as distinguished from supernaturalism." And again: "Secularism rejects theology (that is, the knowledge of God) as a guide and authority in the affairs of this life, ... as for revealed religion, it is based upon miracles, and these to

the scientific mind are altogether inadmissable, being trebly discredited." The life that now is, is all that is. Let us heed the visible, the things of which we are certain, and let us leave eternity, God, the soul and the things pertaining to these, to such benighted persons as theologians and metaphysicians. The theory may seem to be simple, easily grasped by the popular mind, and it unquestionably appeals to the intense realism of our time. "See!" the Secularist may well cry, "O sons of toil, what mighty things your hands have wrought. Bridges and aqueducts, railways and telegraph, cathedrals and theatres, and a thousand other things testify to your skill and strength—what do you lack yet? Have ye not all and abound? Keep to the things that ye can handle and see, and let the unseeable and untouchable alone!"

I propose to examine the arguments by which this theory seeks to commend itself, and to show that the theory itself is inadequate to do that which it professes to do.

Let it be clearly understood at the outset that what distinguishes Christianity from Secularism is not that the former antagonises science while the latter befriends it. No greater misrepresentation of facts could be possible. To say that there have been two camps, an infidel-scientific, and a Christian, opposed to each other, and nourishing a hatred which still makes its influence felt among us, is to say what an impartial view of history refutes. Take Galileo, for example, the stock illustration of infidel lecturers. We now know all that is likely to be known about him. Who was he? A catholic believer, holding by the authority of Scripture just as firmly as the men that persecuted him. Nay, more, it is not correct to say that the whole Christian world was against him, for many Churchmen warmly espoused his cause in face of dangerous opposition. So that the much trumpeted argument amounts to this: that in an unscientific age, a Christian, more intelligent than his fellows, makes a discovery which involves a revolution in popular habits of thought, and seems to involve the destruction of religious belief; that the said Christian was compelled to recant, overborne, as he was, by a bigoted and tyranical

majority. * *Ex uno dice omnes.* But farther: we shall see a little later how Secularists filch some of their most important ideas from the religion which they pretend to despise. Meanwhile let this be noted: Christianity has always been the friend to knowledge. Modern science dates from the revival of religion in the sixteenth century. And the right to declare scientific truth, without fear of punishment, was won by religious men, who counted not their lives dear to them for what, forsooth, according to Secularism, were but phantoms of the night! It needed, as Mr. Froude reminds us, believing men to plant the tree of liberty, and to water it with their blood, before the Humes and the Voltaires could sit under its refreshing shade. The right to sneer at religion on the part of unbelievers has been purchased for them by religion itself. And if sceptics appeal to names, as they are fond of doing, can we not appeal to the fathers of modern inquiry?—Galileo and Kepler, and Copernicus, and Gassendi, and Bacon, and Newton, and Herschel. These were men who gloried in declaring that their thought was but a broken reflection of the Eternal Mind. Science, instead of being the enemy, is the child of Christianity, the offspring of a reverent faith striving to read in things natural the order and beauty and grace which it found in things spiritual. And if in our day there exists, among some well-meaning though narrow-minded men, a certain feeling of jealousy with regard to the advance of scientific truth, it ought to be remembered first, that no such unworthy feeling exists among intelligent Christian advocates, secondly, that even in the quarters where it still lives its existence is to be accounted for, partly by the efforts of Secularists to show that science is destructive of religion, and partly by a failure on the side of some Christians to distinguish between the primary and secondary elements in faith. Intolerance belongs not to religion but to human nature as sinful, and is to be condemned, whether it appears in the coarse guise of ecclesiastical persecution, or in the more refined and subtle form of scholastic *hauteur*. All of us, sceptics

* It is to be regretted that the "rigorous habit of mind" which, we are told, "science engenders" did not strengthen in Galileo the element of veracity.

and believers alike, need to learn the lessons of toleration. Admitting, then, that what differentiates Christianity from Secularism cannot be a hatred toward science on the part of the former, and a love toward it on the part of the later, we must seek elsewhere for the differentiating elements. These elements are found: 1. in a denial of the miraculous; 2. in an assertion of a self-originated and self-contained morality. These two positions stand in most intimate relation. If there be no miraculous, that is, if God has not revealed Himself, then any morality that can exist must be derived from human sources; and if, on the other hand, morality be found to contain elements incapable of explanation on natural grounds, we must go beyond humanity, must prolong our vision into the unseen, in order to find "the sufficient reason." Let us note in detail the various arguments put forth by Secularist writers on the basis indicated.*

1. The distinction which Secularists attempt to draw between the duties of this life and those of the next, is artificial and unreal. It is instructive to find Secularism which boasts of its freedom from theological methods, falling into the worst faults of the older dogmatic. The very mistake here perpetrated by unbelief is nothing more nor less than a rehabilitated idol of the schools. I cannot draw a line between my duties to God, and my duties to man, and say that I shall exclude the one group, and pay attention to the other. "To cultivate the splendid provinces of Time," (to use Mr. G. W. Foote's phrase) is "to care for the realms of Eternity." The duties that I owe to man, I owe to God, and in worshipping God I serve humanity, If I fail to cultivate goodness, and truth, and righteousness here, then eternity will find me the loser. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." We cannot then divorce the seen from the unseen. Eternity, as it were, looks at us through Time. The Present is a parenthesis between an infinite Past and an infinite Future crying evermore, From Eternity to Eternity!

*The question of the credibility of miracles deserves separate treatment. If the present effort meets with encouragement I hope to show in a future paper the falsity of Secularist objections to the reality of the supernatural.

2. Secularists tell us that as we have no certain knowledge of the future state, we are not concerned with it. To quote Mr Foote's words: "Secularism neither affirms nor denies a future life; it simply professes no *knowledge* of such a state, no information respecting it which might serve as a guide in the affairs of this life." On this argument I venture to offer the following observations:

(i.) The attempt to base morality on an ignoring of the spiritual world must prove a failure. For if a belief in the future world is a superstition, it is the duty of Secularism not to ignore it, but to deny it, and, if possible, to extirpate it; if, however, it is not a superstition, but a belief capable of justification by appropriate evidence, then surely that must be a stunted and defective morality which takes no account of it.

(ii.) There is a fallacy lurking in Mr. Foote's use of the word of "knowledge." If he means the consciousness which is ours by a contemplation of things outward and visible, then his statement is so obvious that it was not worth his while to write it down. Or does he take knowledge to include also the information we acquire by looking within, and noting spiritual phenomena? Then his remark cannot be verified. For the universality of religion involves the universality of belief in an immortal life. As Emerson has shown in his famous plea for a future existance, the belief is held in common by the lowest and by the highest races. Savage and civilised; philosopher, poet, prophet and divine unite in asserting it. Now, whence comes the belief? The only reply possible is: it is an indisputable element in the normal consciences of the race, involved in the original make of human nature; and in order to destroy it, you must rend the fair fabric of the spirit. The Secularist may reply: "I have no such consciousness, and therefore reject the conclusion you wish to draw." The position which we take, however, is not that every individual is necessitated to believe in a future life, but that such belief is a necessity for mankind, taken broadly. Let us illustrate our point. A feeling of delight in beauty is native to the soul of man, yet do we not know men so low in the moral scale as to exhibit little or nothing of an aesthetic consciousness? Or, to take an illustration which

is even more pertinent. It is told of John Stuart Mill that he cultivated the intellectual side of his nature to the exclusion of the finer and more poetic elements. Analysis had penetrated the inmost secrets of nature, only to find them "dust and ashes at the core." The darkness of a great sorrow fell upon him. The needed restorative he found in Wordsworth, the most religious poet of our time; analysis was vanquished for the time by sympathies; and mental abstraction by the concrete realities of nature. So a man may so cultivate the powers that are directed to the visible, as to dwarf the spiritual organ whose thoughts love to wander through eternity. Nature may be expelled with a pitchfork, but she will return and exact retribution for the insult.

iii. To the Christian, knowledge of a future life has come. He who is, as Strauss, the leader of modern unbelief, says, "The highest model within the reach of our thought," has come out of the eternal world to give absolute certainty to the instincts of the soul, and to reveal in His own Person the Life to which these instincts testify. Hence, now the intimations of immortality given us in natural religion, are lifted to a higher plane, and penetrated with a Divine power, spring into deathless vigour out of the new conception of the Eternal God which the Christ has bought us. The truth about which men have argued in the past has now been clearly revealed. God loved man and sent His Son to save him. But the love that saves must perfect the work it has begun. The God that gives Himself to man does not retract His gift: what He gives, He gives for ever. The race can ever lose the Christ nor the immortal powers that dwell within Him, and so "the soul that rises in us our life's star," "has had" "elsewhere its setting," and that "elsewhere" is the Paradise of God, the true home of men.

3. Secularism denies the efficacy of prayer, and affirms as Mr. Foote says: that "Science is the only available Providence of man." Here, again, we discover the underlying fallacy of popular unbelief—*the assertion of antagonism between God and science.* We must repeat that the assertion is gratuitous and false. What is science but knowledge of the methods of Divine government in nature and history?

What is a law but an observed mode of Divine activity? The laws of science are the laws of God. The law of gravitation is as much an ordinance of God as the Decalogue. And the believer in God will strive to observe the laws of nature all the more when he reflects that they are expressions of the Father's will. Admitting the existence of God, the Christian can see that He has made provision for the exercise of prayer, in the order of history and nature. One of the essential elements of prayer is submission to the Divine will. Nay, more; the very silence of God is frequently the answer that the soul needs. "The miserable," says Mr. Foote, "have cried for comfort, sufferers for some mitigation of their pain, captives for deliverance, the oppressed for freedom, and those who have fought the good fight of good against ill for some ray of hope to lighten despair; and what answer has been vouchsafed?" What answer? Let the men who have prayed make reply; let the frail virgins amid the bloody horrors of the amphitheatre, let the victims of the thumscrew and the rack, and the fiery stake, let the heroes that died amid the swamps of Holland, and in the deserts of the far west for the sake of liberty—let these make reply, and in unison with the martyrs and apostles and confessors of Christ in every age, they will say, "In our distress we cried unto our God, and He heard us; yea, when we passed through the dark waters He was with us, and when the noises of the world affrighted us, lo! His peace filled our hearts, and when death came we knew our victory over it, for we knew ourselves in the hands of the Eternal." God has answered prayer, as numberless testimonies prove, and no absence of testimony on the part of some can prove the falsity of the testimony afforded by others. The answers to prayer witnessed by men on the modern mission field, as well as by such men at home as George Müller and Pastor Flieduer, may indeed be scorned by the sceptical mind but stand as perpetual refutations of its theories. If George Müller has founded and carried on his wonderful orphanages *without asking the least support from anybody*, and if his prayers are not to be reckoned as the cause of his success, why is it that our Secularist friends cannot follow his example, and

thus obviate the distressing confession which Mr. Foote makes near the close of his pamphlet, where he says, "As organisation is impossible in these days without money, the development of Secularist organisation is painfully slow." But farther: while knowledge of the laws of nature is a most important element in human training, it may well be asked, does it cover the whole ground? Is it productive of itself, of the highest kind of life? Imagine a man then conducting his life according to the Secularist idea. He makes himself acquainted with the laws of health, with the rules of commerce, with the weak as well as the strong points of his fellows, so that he may be able to play the game of life with a fair chance of success. As he proceeds along the Secularist path, he notes that he can violate many laws counted moral, without any injury to his health, that in commerce he "can sail near the wind," and outwit his fellows by means which may satisfy the market demands on morality, but cannot rise to the necessities of the true ideal. What then is there to prevent him from a moral fall? "Utilitarianism," replies the Secularist, or, "regard for the interests of others." Not to dwell on the fact that this answer can pretend to deal only with a part of the difficulty, the individual supposed could reply: "*Why*, should I pay attention to the interests of others, when they clash with my own? Have I not learned the rules of the game, and shall I sell my chances of success by giving up to others that for which I have so painfully laboured. If the exigencies of your theory demand such a complete change of front—well, at least, I am entitled to know on what grounds you justify it." It is needless to say that our supposed friend has never received a satisfactory reply. Secularism shuts man up to himself. The supreme need of man is to get outside himself, to find the true centre of his being in the Infinite One. And the only power that can achieve this is the enthusiasm born of a Divine life, in Chalmers' famous phrase, "the expulsive power of a new affection," which seizing him in its mighty grasp, lifts him above the meanness and pettiness of time, and makes him an inheritor of eternity. To see God is to forget self. The man who is always giving side glances at his own interests, temporal or spiritual, is as

yet in the trammels of self, and has not attained to the high perogative of the soul.

4. Secularism teaches that religion is opposed to happiness. "Happiness is not a degrading thing," says Mr. Foote, as though Christianity taught otherwise. It is true that certain phases of Christianity have looked askantly upon the joys of life, but it is equally true, as Professor Blaikie points out, such phases were created partly by the influence of a false philosophy. The ancient ideas as to the essential corruption of matter, and as tc the body being the seat of sin, gave birth to asceticism, which in turn produced monasticism with all its attendant evils. But where Christianity has been kept free from the alloy of an ultra-spiritualism, it has always striven to preserve the Spirit of Christ, Who watched with kindling eye the children playing in the market place, or the lilies fairer than Israel's King, or the sunbeams kissing the distant wave. But the conception of happiness lying at the heart of the Christian system is infinitely higher than that taught by Secularism. (1) Secularism teaches that we should aim at happiness, "as the great purpose of social life." Christianity affirms that to aim at happiness is to miss it, that there are some things which can be obtained only by renouncing them, and that happiness is among the number. Happiness cannot be commanded by any exercise of will; it springs spontaneously out of certain creative conditions ignored by Secularism. (2) The creative conditions are the graces which go to make up virtue. Happiness comes to the man who seeks to do the Divine will, and who strives to keep his spiritual powers in touch with the unseen. The search of the individual, or of society, must be for virtue; the flowers of joy spring, not from earthly, but from celestial soil. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things—joy and gladness— will be added unto you." To divorce happiness from virtue is to destroy both. They are separable in thought, but inseparable in essence. Both together constitute the summum bonum, or the Good for which the highest spirits of the race have longed; and its realisation is the

> "One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

II.

Let us now turn from the negative to examine what is positive in the theory we are combatting. And here, if anywhere, we surely must expect that Secularism will work with its own tools, and use its own materials. Our expectations are disappointed. The stones with which it seeks to strengthen its house are taken from the Christian Temple. We shall make good our charge.

1. In Secularist literature we very frequently meet with the word "progress," and Secularist ideas are reckoned pre-eminently "progressive." Now it goes without saying that the race has progressed and is progressing, though it must be doubted whether Secularism will aid it in its journey. But the question is, to what do we owe the very idea of progress? I answer, to the theology and to the theological methods which Secularists relegate to the land of dreams. Theology also is a science, nay, the queen of the sciences, and from her has come the idea of progress, of orderly development from less to more, from rude beginnings to most finished ends. The idea of Revelation involves the idea of progress. History is the organ through which God speaks, His voice sounding more clear from age to age, and man's spirit becoming at the same time more susceptible to its call. Principal Fairbairn remarks: "The idea of progress in nature, in man, and in history was the direct creation of theology. That is a fact in the history of thought open to no manner of doubt." And so when Secularism magnifies and almost deifies the thought of progress, it is only paying unconscious homage to the theological spirit. Theology, then, instead of being the foe, has been in truth the creator of modern science, the inspirer of the spirit by which modern enquiry has won for itself deathless renown.

But let this be marked: What room within its borders has Secularism for this borrowed conception of progress? On strictly Secularist principles—none. For progress at least involves two things: (1) a rational purpose, and (2) a rational end. But now, if in accordance with Secularism, man is to be explained simply through the ideas of physical science, such as matter and force, how is the conception of

rationality or purpose to be introduced? If man be an aggregate of atoms merely, *how* can *they* produce a moral order, or give birth to efforts after an ideal? No verbal jugglery can make us confonnd spirit and matter; the distinction between them "stands like a reef in the tumbling seas of philosophy, and its roots take hold on the core of the world." Motion may be predicated of matter; progress is possible only to mind. And thus underlying the most vaunted terms of Secularism, we find the element which it strives to ignore. 2. Secularism is, in the long run, forced to take note of certain elements in human nature, which surely do not come within the scope of "strict science." It finds, as indeed every theory of life must find, that man cannot live by bread alone, that he has cravings after the Infinite, which can be suppressed only by torturing and maiming the spirit. Now, Christianity gives man what he needs—a vision of the living God. But Secularism will hear of no such gift, snatches it away, and gives instead—what? Man himself, no longer the individual but the race. The word humanity is spelt with a capital H, and henceforth becomes the Secularist's God. Humanity is viewed as a mighty organism, wondrously inter-related, so that a thought or motive or action affects the whole for good or ill, advances or retards its progress to perfection. Humanity, we are told, can satisfy the instincts of "Love, Reverence, and Service," which are rooted in man. In other words, the very height of lawlessness has been reached; the creature is set upon the Throne from which his Maker has been deposed. But let us ask: Whence has Secularism obtained the idea of humanity as an organism? Is it not ultimately from the Scriptures which it wishes to destroy? Christianity teaches that the "Head of every man is Christ," that "We are members one of another," and that when "one member suffers all the others suffer with it." Humanity, in the creative purpose of God, is rooted in Christ, so united to Him that the evil which it has wrought passes over to Him the good which He has achieved lives in it. It was through Christ and as expressive of His thought, that humanity came into being, and it is through Him that it has found, and still finds, cleansing from its sin and renewal of its

exhausted energies. Every virtue, therefore, which we discover in the race, every aspiration after truth and righteousness, every grace that wakes our admiration, adds fresh glory to the Inspiring source, is a new gem in the diadem of Christ.

And now let us see if the idea of humanity fulfils the purposes for which it is invoked. Does humanity satisfy the instinct of love? Love to be real must be based on personal relation; between a personal being and an impersonal idea there can be no such feeling as love. Go to any one of the great masterpieces of devotion, the utterances of sinning, struggling, suffering man, and see if humanity can take the place of God. Is it the Psalms, the highest fruit of Israel's genius?—"Bless Humanity, O my soul, and forget not all His (its) benefits; Who (which) forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who (which) healeth all thy diseases." Is it Job, the ancient plea for faith?—"Oh that I knew where I might find Humanity; that I might come even to His (its) seat! I would know the words which He (it) would answer me, and understand what He (it) would say unto me." Is it the Magnificat of the new era?—"My soul doth magnify Humanity, and my spirit hath rejoiced in Humanity my Saviour." An abstraction such as the idea of humanity may indeed fill a gap in our dialectic, but can never satisfy the heart touched with a thirst after the living God. These remarks may also be applied to the ideas of reverence and service. If humanity be as Secularism affirms, a collection of "beautiful bodies," curiously articulated and wondrously organised, I may indeed admire, but cannot worship. Worship is expressive of the attitude of spirit towards spirit, not of matter toward matter. Further: It expresses the attitude of spirit to higher, yea, the highest Spirit. Humanity is composed of finite beings, and no multiplication of the finite can produce the infinite. And therefore "the infinite in man," as Carlyle says, must have an infinite reality without him, or his moral consciousness is a player of idle tricks. Once more: Is the instinct of service satisfied with the Secularist ideal? If I am to serve humanity, I must have a reason for doing so. "Why," may not the outcast ask himself, "Should I serve society, seeing that society has made me

what I am, an exile and a vagabond? What claims has humanity upon me? Men have cast me forth, careless as to my destiny; why should I care for them?" The Secularist has no reply, save to urge the original plea. The Christian, however, meeting such an one can say: Lift your eyes, O man, to a grander sphere than this! The world's greatest Outcast has been the world's greatest Servant; and His service of man found its inspiration in His love to God. The more men hated Him, the more He served; and the love of the Father made Him victorious over the hate of humanity; and so it is still. The man that loves God must love the men He made, and he best serves the race that serves its Maker.

3. Secularism claims to be positive on the ground, to quote Mr. Foote's words, that "it leaves men all science to study, all art to pursue and enjoy, all humanity to love and serve." Let us test this bold assertion. Can art live in a Secularist atmosphere? "Art," says Professor Flint, "of a high and healthy order has ever drawn its inspiration largely from religion. The grandest buildings, the most beautiful paintings, the noblest music, the greatest poems are religious." In the well-known words of our greatest art critic: "All art is an expression of man's delight in the work of God." Who are the men that have stood highest in the ranks of artistic genius? Rubens, Rembrandt, Raphael, Angelo, Mendelssohn, Beethoven; Dante, and Milton, and Spenser, and many others—all of them men pervaded with deepest religious feelings, striving to express in painting, music, and sculpture the grand things given them of God. How false, then, to reason, and to history, to the claim of Secularism to be patron and preserver of art! But again, I ask, can art live in a Secularist atmosphere? Take poetry, for example. Has poetry any right to be on Secularist principles? How can imagination live if it is cut off from its true home—"the celestial mountains"? Now the true note of a poet is his delight in the beauty of Nature. Mark the conception of Beauty: how does it arise? Its very being, as a great philosopher taught, consists in its being felt. That is, it springs from the contact of the inner and outer worlds, from the meeting together of the human spirit and

external things. And when the consciousness of beauty arises in the soul, that consciousness is not an end in itself, but points to something beyond, to the invisible, of which it is a witness. Now if our best poets in their best moods, have thus powerfully felt, as Wordsworth sings,

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

What shall we say of the theory which mocks at the reality of that presence, and therefore at the inmost secret of the poet's inspiration?

But when we turn to the Drama, that department of the poet's activity in which he especially fixes his eye on man, his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, we discover still more clearly the inadequacy of the Secularist idea. How can we explain such a matchless literature as that of the Greek Tragedy apart from the spiritual world? Could the sceptred spirits of the past, Aeschylus and Sophocles, and Schiller, and Goethe, and Shakespeare, have been what they were, and still are—the most potent forces known to civilisation—if they had believed that conscience and law and sin were not realities but figments fancy born? Take the last named and greatest of the five, the "myriad-minded" Shakespeare. To study the creations of his genius is itself an education. Perhaps the three most wonderful are the three in which reference to the unseen is most evident—Hamlet, Macbeth, and Othello. When the Prince of Denmark is tempted to commit suicide it is not utilitarian motives that restrain him, but

> "The dread of *something after death*
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns.
> *Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.*"

However plausibly he argues with himself, he dare not commit the deed of vengeance. Conscience is at work, and thus

> "The native hue of resolution
> *Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.*"

The whole significance of *Hamlet* lies in the spiritual

region; we hear of no generalized experiences but of a conflict between a lower and a better self, between inclination and the imperative of conscience. The same remark holds good of *Macbeth*. When the hapless Thane of Cawdor is about to murder Duncan, mark his words:

> "*If the assassination*
> *Could trammel up the consequence and catch*
> With his surcease, success; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
> But here, upon this bank and shoal of time
> We'd jump *the life to come.*"

And after the horrid deed has been perpetrated, his torture-stricken soul can only cry,

> "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand?"

What a mocking voice, as of a Secularist spirit, broke in upon him!

> "A little water clears us of this deed."

"*A little water.*" This is the final answer of unbelief to the deepest needs of the soul. But spiritual necessities, though vanquished for a time, will re-assert toemselves, as Lady Macbeth afterwards discovered. All Arabia's spices were unable to perfume her little hand. Finally, in the case of the great-hearted Moor, do we not see how potent were the operations of the conscience? He determines to punish Desdemona only when he is thoroughly convinced of her guilt. This is the undying pathos of the play, that a pure and aspiring soul should be flung from its high seat through the malign powers of a human fiend. Yet even, in its downward plunge, a gleam of comfort shoots through the dense darkness:

> "Oh, I were damned beneath all depth in hell,
> But that I did proceed upon just grounds
> To this extremity."

Well may Shakespeare be called "the dramatist of the conscience." But what if, as Secularism teaches, conscience has not its roots in the unseen, but is the product of experience, evolved out of the whirl and clash of life's forces? If the grandest spirits of the race have found the Biblical notions of sin, guilt, remorse, the future world, deep laid in the foundations of the soul. What are

we to say to the theory which sneers at them as the offspring of a dark and illiberal theology? Is it not high time that we should ask, who *are* the dreamers?—the men that go through life, engrossed in the appearances of sense, all unconscious of the realities around them, or the men who, looking out upon the measureless sphere of being, seek to live in time as the sons of the Eternal.

Secularism professes to hold out high hopes to man, of progress in art and science and literature. Christianity is not only a hope; it is a fulfilment as well. Our ideal is the Risen Christ. We know and want no other. Starting from Him as the centre, we would go forth into all realms of knowledge, and find them vitalized and vivified by the spiritual heat of His presence. The path of the advancing Christ is the path of fuller light, and clearer knowledge. To rob humanity of Christ is to deprive it of its inspiring power, and abiding glory. Secularism may speak of its poor, "human ideals." Ours is grander and nobler by far. The Infinite Beauty and Perfection of the "Word made flesh, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Secularism has but the refrain of spiritual despair to chant in the ears of men:

> "Christ is not risen, no
> He lies and moulders low!
> Christ is not risen!
> Eat, drink and play, and think that this bliss:
> There is no heaven but this;
> There is no hell,
> Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,
> Seeing it visits still
> With equalest apportionment of ill
> Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust
> The unjust and the just
> With Christ who is not risen

But Christ speaks: "I am the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, and I have the keys of death and of Hades"— and at His speech, doubt disappears in faith, and the life that now is, is flooded with the glory of that which is to come.

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